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exists solely because men still choose it; and, when nations shall all discard it as the arbiter of their disputes, or the instrument of their ambition, cupidity or vengeance, it will of course vanish from the earth like darkness before the rising sun, and give place to rational, peaceful methods, such as Stipulated Arbitration, or a Congress of Nations, more effectual for all purposes of protection or redress, than the sword ever was, or ever can be.

“THE CAUSE OF PEACE — WHAT IS IT?”

In the January number of the Advocate I find an article with the above title, to which I wish to call attention. The writer first tells us what he thinks the cause of peace is *not*, and then what he thinks it *is*. He says, “We go merely against the *custom of war*.” And war means “a contest of force between two nations. It can, in strict propriety of speech, exist only between *two distinct nationalities*.”

Now it seems to me that this close definition cuts off nearly all the strength of our cause. (1) If we must be limited thus, we can get no deep hold of the real cause of war. War between nations would never occur if it were not for our false notions, evil dispositions and wrong practices at home on this subject. Let us look at it a little. Why do we object to war between nations? Why is it wrong? I presume there might be a thousand reasons given, showing how inexpedient, irrational, unnecessary, expensive, destructive of human happiness, burdensome beyond measure, and after all, inefficient, this hideous practice of barbarity, this “concentration of all crimes,” this master-piece of the devil, really is.

But there is a reason which, I conceive, reaches higher and deeper and farther than all the rest. It is the reason of reasons, the one that gives rise to all others, around which all others cluster. It is simply this, war is wrong because it is *taking life* contrary to *God's authority*. (2) To this I presume all peace-men must agree. Because if we had God's authority, war would not be wrong, and would be productive of good. But the violation of God's will and law, are always attended with evil results.

Now, if taking the life of foreigners is a violation of God's authority, and, therefore, attended with evil, and not with good, does it not logically follow that taking the lives of our own citizens, violates God's authority, and likewise brings *evil*, and not *good*? Is it not correct to say that war is the business of killing men in large numbers by men? Does the cause for which they are killed, by one or the other party, give a right to change the name of the killing?

The article quoted says, “the cause of peace does not inquire how a people deprived of their rights may regain them.” If the Irish should rise up, and kill a hundred thousand English; if the French peasantry should take arms against the nobles, and produce a revolution; if the millions of blacks in the South should demand the right of suffrage by the blood of half a million whites, would these slaughters not be entitled to the name of war, and not come within the province of the cause of peace? (3)

But this, perhaps, involves the question of the inviolability of life, which, the writer tells us again, is not within the limits of our cause. I will agree with him that “the friends of peace are not associated to *resist* or *censure* the enforcement of law.” Certainly not to resist, and not to *censure the enforcement of law*. But the *manner* of the enforcement, if it violates the fundamental principles of peace, most certainly it is the *duty* of every Peace man, who believes that the principles of God's truth are good for

the world, to censure such *manner of enforcement*. Am I right? Can principles bend to fit men's preference and convenience? Can the great truths which underlie this cause, be varied to suit the false notions of men? (4) I can conceive that the cause of peace does not necessarily “embrace *all kinds* of peace,” just as “temperance does not include all kinds of temperance.” But if we have any great principle by which we expect war to be abolished, does not the subject embrace all kinds of peace where those central thoughts are involved? If the principles by which we expect to do away the *custom of war*, may be violated *ad libitum*, by rulers at home, then they are not principles, our cause is only a pretence, peace-men are a set of visionary speculators, our strength is gone. Is this radical? I see no consistency or propriety in raising a great noise about a pandemonium of wickedness away off in some foreign countries, while at home bloodshed may be legalized with impunity.

The great majority of the people say they are already in favor of peace except in some extreme cases, as they choose to call them. They already condemn the “*custom of war*.” (5) Then, taking the grounds of the article quoted, what point can we make? (6) Will the Editor, or some contributor, give us a few rays, as to what it is that we are to call the world's attention to, and the central thought or principle? “The cause of Peace — what is it?” W. G. H.

NEW VIENNA, Ohio.

COMMENTS. — Our friend may find in some foregoing articles a *virtual* answer to his queries; but, as he and others may desire something more definite on points suggested by him, we will append a few brief notes: —

1. Not at all; it rather strengthens by concentrating it. The more precise and definite the object of any enterprise like this, the greater and better will be its impression on the public mind. The cause of peace, as defined and prosecuted by us from the first, clearly allows, invites and demands the concentration upon it of not only everything that our friend suggests, but of all other facts, arguments and motives pertinent to the case.

2. This statement leaves untouched the real point in issue — whether *all* taking of human life is contrary to God's will. If it be, that settles the matter of course; but *does* the Bible, in the Old Testament or the New, declare it *always* wrong to take human life? The Peace Society says it is wrong to take life *in war*, but does not say whether it is so or not in cases not included in our cause.

3. The mere killing of men “in large numbers” is not necessarily war. In the reign of Henry VIII. more than 70,000 persons were hanged in England; but in all that judicial butchery there was no war, unless we give this name to every enforcement of law, and that would just make government itself little else than an incessant war upon its subjects. Because the enforcement of law in a given case sacrifices a multitude of lives, it may still be in principle only a legitimate operation of government, as during our late rebellion, in punishing its own subjects. The putting down of the New York riot in 1863 by a military force destroyed at least one or two thousand lives; but it was, in strict propriety of speech, no more war than any other riot or mob at any time in any part of the land. The

Peace Society was never designed to interfere with the execution of law upon its violators; and those who suppose it is, have yet to learn the simplest elements of our cause.

4. Peace men, like other citizens, should oppose in a proper way *whatever* is wrong in their government; but this duty is not restricted nor peculiar to members of a peace society. The duty is incumbent on *all* citizens alike. The Peace Society has no more responsibility in the case than the Temperance, the Tract or the Bible Society.

5. This proves too much. Through all the Anti-slavery conflict nearly everybody claimed to be a friend of freedom; and when the Temperance cause started, did not every rum-drinker protest that he was already temperate? So through a long catalogue. If all *are* opposed to "the custom of war," let them prove it by helping us do it away. No; the plea is false; and we marvel that our excellent friend, so well informed on the whole subject, should *seem* to endorse it as true and valid.

6. We can make not one point merely, as our friend would, but a multitude, as many indeed as there are arguments against the custom of war. Need we a broader target? To "what shall we call public attention" on this subject! Why, to everything that makes war what it is, and always has been — its folly, its absurdity, its vices and crimes, its waste of property and life, its contrariety to the gospel, to reason and common sense, its countless evils of every kind, its baleful influence on all the great interests of mankind both for time and for eternity. If in quest of points or arguments, we can hardly go amiss; and the chief difference between us and our worthy friend is, that he would confine himself to a single point, or one class of arguments against war, influential over only a few minds, while we would urge all *his* arguments, and a great multitude of others likely to interest in our cause more than ten times as many minds.

SOME GENERAL REMARKS. — Our friend, believing in the strict inviolability of human life, would oppose war chiefly on this ground. We are quite willing he should. It is a strong ground well defined; and such peace men, generally actuated by Christian principles and motives, we deem the most reliable supporters of our cause. If you can persuade all men, or a decisive majority of them, to believe human life strictly inviolable, and to carry this principle into practice, war would of course cease ere-long; but not one man, not even one friend of peace in ten, if in a hundred, believes in this principle. What, then, shall we do? These men, many of them, are just as conscientious in their belief as you are in yours; as really opposed on *other* grounds to war as you are on yours, and as willing to labor in their way for its entire, perpetual abolition, the only object of this great reform. Shall we, then, repel or discourage the co-operation of such men, these ninety-nine in every hundred friends to our cause? We *must* have their aid, or we shall inevitably fail; but how shall we secure it? Shall we wait till they are all, or a large majority,

converted to your radical views? If so, in what year of the Christian era is the custom of war likely to be banished from any country on the globe?

It is not thus we reason in kindred reforms. If you sought as your specific object to abolish duelling in a given community, how would you proceed? It is fair to presume that the mass of the people, certainly the better portion, condemn and deplore the practice, and would like to see it abolished; but not one in a hundred believes human life inviolable, or thinks it wrong for an individual to take the life of an assailant in self-defence, or for civil government to punish the violation of its laws by using all the force necessary for the purpose. How would you set yourself at work to abolish duelling in such a community? To the good men on whom alone you must rely, would you say, unless you agree with us in believing human life inviolable, and in construing other parts of the Bible just as we do, we cannot accept your aid in doing away this barbarous custom? No; while retaining and freely expressing, as far as you chose, all your views, radical or otherwise, you would urge every one opposed to duelling, to aid in its abolition.

So in every reform. That of Temperance, for example, seeks to secure entire abstinence from intoxicating liquors, and restricts itself to this alone. If a man will in fact abstain from the manufacture, sale and use of such liquors as beverages, you let him reach that conclusion in whatever way he pleases. You are not responsible for either his arguments or his motives, but only for the result to which he comes in practice — total abstinence. If *he* actually abstains, you insist as a temperance man on nothing more.

So, also, in Peace. This cause aims, as its precise and sole object, to do away the custom of war; just this, and nothing else. It asks its friends merely to help do away this huge and terrible evil; and it leaves them to do so from any arguments or motives they shall choose. Some may do so for one class of reasons, others for reasons quite different; but if for *any* reason they will only aid us in putting an end to the follies, crimes and calamities of war, we welcome their co-operation without sitting in severe or captious judgment on their logic or their motives. We should be glad to have them reason as we do; but we insist only on their helping us do away the entire war-system, root and branch, from this and every other Christian land. Of this result we would make sure. Our principles and measures are designed to cover the whole evil that we seek to do away; and if any man, professing sympathy and support, wishes still to retain in some mitigated form the war-system, we must regard him, whatever his motives, as an obstruction, if not an enemy to our cause. In their actual, ultimate result, our modes of reasoning, our arguments, measures and means, will be found, we fully believe, more effective in securing the great, sole object sought by the cause of Peace, than those of its more extremely radical friends. We cover the whole evil to be removed; and what more can any one consistently ask? Why repel nine persons in ten by insisting on extreme views not at all essential to the object we seek?